

California F2F Outcomes

1. Reducing the number and rate of children placed away from their birth families

- The number of children referred for maltreatment increased sharply from 496,995 in 1998 to 538,677 in 2000, then increased steadily thereafter.
- In 2001, 550,824 children were referred for child maltreatment. Of these 115,270 were substantiated.
- Approximately 56 per 1,000 children had referrals for child maltreatment in 2001. Twelve per 1,000 were substantiated (22 percent of children with referrals were substantiated). Between 1998 and 2001, substantiations given referrals remained stable at approximately 22-24 percent.
- Substantiation rates have remained stable at approximately 12 per 1,000 between 1998 and 2001.
- First entries to foster care decreased from 35,558 in 1998 to 32,085 in 2000 and then rose slightly in 2001. In 2001, 32,557 children entered foster care, at a rate of approximately 4 per 1,000 children.
- Incidence rates remained relatively stable at approximately 4 per 1,000 between 1998 and 2001.
- Between 1998 and 2001, the proportion of children entering care for the first time who were infants remained stable at 19 percent.
- In 2001, almost half (49 percent) of children entering care for the first time were age 5 or younger, 25 percent were 6-10 years old, 21 percent were 11-15 years old, and 5 percent were 16 or older.
- The proportion of children entering care for the first time that were Black declined slightly between 1998 and 2001 from 21 to 19 percent, while the proportion of Hispanic children increased from 39 to 42 percent.
- Hispanic children accounted for 42 percent of all children entering care for the first time in 2001, while White children accounted for 33 percent. Black children accounted for 20 percent and Asian children comprised 4 percent of all entries.
- In 2001, neglect accounted for 72 percent of all first entries to foster care, physical abuse for 17 percent, sexual abuse for 7 percent, and other abuse types accounted for 5 percent of first entries.
- Between 1998 and 2001 the proportion of children entering care for the first time who were first placed in FFA homes increased from 14 to 24 percent while the proportion of first placements in kinship care declined from 25 to 16 percent.
- In 2001, 33 percent of children entering care for the first time were first placed in foster homes and 24 percent were placed in FFA homes. Kinship care accounted for 16 percent of first placements and group homes for 6 percent. Twenty percent of children entering care for the first time in 2001 were first placed in shelters.

2. Increasing the number and rate of children coming into foster care who are placed in their own neighborhoods or communities

- Between 1998 and 2000 children in kinship care were more likely to be placed closer to home than were children placed in non-kin care. During this period the proportion of children in kinship care placed within one mile of home remained stable at approximately 33 percent, while the proportion of children in non-kin care placed at this distance remained stable at 8 percent.

- Additionally, between 1998 and 2000, approximately 27 percent of children in kinship care were placed 11 or more miles from home compared to 43 percent of children placed in non-kin care.

3. Reducing the number of children served in institutional and group care

- Between 1998 and 2002 foster care caseloads declined from 104,966 to 90,555
- Over this period the distribution of placement types shifted toward an increase in children placed in FFA homes and a decrease in children placed with kin. Specifically, the proportion of children placed in FFA homes increased from 17 percent in 1998 to 22 percent in 2002 and the proportion of children in kinship care decreased from 46 percent to 35 percent over this same period.
- As of October 1, 2002, 35 percent of children in care were placed with kin, 22 percent were in FFA homes, and another 15 percent were in traditional county foster homes. Group homes accounted for 8 percent of placements and guardian homes for 9 percent.
- Traditional foster home placements were more common among infants while kinship care was more common among children between the ages of 1 and 15.
- Black and Hispanic children were more likely to be placed with kin, while White and Asian children were more likely to be placed in either FFA or traditional foster homes.

4. Decreasing lengths of stay of children in placement

- The median length of stay for children who entered care between 1998 and 2000 was 549 days (18 months).
- Children placed in FFA homes experienced longer lengths of stay than those in kinship care or traditional foster homes (660 days (22 months) vs. 625 days (21 months) and 408 days (13 months), respectively).
- Black children experienced longer median lengths of stay than did their counterparts in other racial groups. The median length of stay was at 8 or more months longer for Black children in kinship care than for any other racial group (773 days (25 months) vs. 635 days (21 months)). Additionally, for those in non-kin care it was 3 or more months longer than for those in other racial groups (611 days (20 months) vs. 513 days (17 months)).
- For all racial groups, children in kinship care experienced longer median lengths of stay than those in non-kin care. This pattern was evenly distributed across all racial groups.

5. Increasing the number and rate of children reunified with their birth families

- Children in non-kin care were reunified more quickly than were children in kinship care. Among children who entered their first spell in care in 1998 (who were in care for at least 5 days), after 15 months, 30 percent of children placed with kin had been reunified compared to 37 percent of children placed with non-kin.
- Among children in both kin and non-kin care the proportion of children reunified increased over time and the kin /non-kin disparity decreased. Specifically, after 36 months, 52 percent of children in kinship care and 56 percent of children in non-kin care had been reunified.
- Among children in both kin and non-kin care, the proportion reunified at 15 months tended to be lower for infants than for children ages 1-15. The disparity between reunification rates for infants and older children increased over time for both kin and non-kin placements.

- Among children in kinship care, over time the proportion reunified was lower for Black children than for White or Hispanic children. Among children in non-kin care, reunification rates were similarly lower for Black children than their White or Hispanic counterparts, though this racial disparity was less pronounced among children in non-kin care.
- Fifteen-month reunification rates increased slightly between 1998 and 1999. Specifically, among children who entered their first spell in care in 1999, after 15 months, 31 percent of children placed with kin and 42 percent of children placed with non-kin had been reunified.

6. Decreasing the number and rate of children reentering care

- Among children entering care for the first time in 1998 who were reunified within one year, after 12 months, 10 percent of children placed with kin and 14 percent of those placed with non-kin had reentered care.
- By 24 months, 14 percent of children placed with kin and 20 percent of those placed with non-kin had reentered care.
- Among children in both kin and non-kin care, reentry rates at 12 months were highest for infants, at 13 percent and 21 percent respectively. By 24 months, reentry rates increased to 18 percent for infants in kinship care, and 27 percent for infants in non-kin care.
- Re-entry rates were higher for Black children than for White or Hispanic children in both kin and non-kin care. After 12 months, 15 percent of Black children placed with kin, and 16 percent of those placed with non-kin had re-entered care. By 24 months, the proportion of Black children re-entering care increased to 20 percent for those in kinship care, and 23 percent among those in non-kin care.
- When 1998 and 1999 entry cohorts are compared, overall reentry remained stable. Specifically, among children entering care for the first time in 1999 who were reunified within one year, after 12 months, 10 percent of children placed with kin and 13 percent of those placed with non-kin had reentered care.

7. Reducing the number of placement moves children in care experience

- Among children who entered their first spell in care in 1998 (who were in care for at least 5 days), after 3 months, 10 percent of children placed with kin and 16 percent of children with non-kin had experienced three or more placement moves.
- After 2 years these figures rose to 32 percent for children placed with kin and 58 percent for those placed with non-kin.
- Among children who entered their first spell in care in 2000 (who were in care for at least 5 days), the proportion of children experiencing three or more placement moves after 3 months increased slightly to 14 percent among those placed with kin and to 18 percent among those in non-kin care.
- For children entering in 1998 (who were in care for at least 5 days), the proportion of children experiencing three or more placements by 24 months increased with age. Children in non-kin care were more likely to experience three or more placement moves at an earlier age than were children in kinship care. Specifically, 64 percent of children ages 1-5 in non-kin care had experienced three or more placement moves by 24 months compared to 31 percent of those in kinship care.
- There were few differences in placement stability across racial groups.

8. Increasing the number and rate of brothers and sisters placed together

- As of July 1, 2002, 71 percent of all children in care also had one or more siblings in care.
- On this date, 40 percent of all children with one or more siblings in care were placed with all of their siblings while 65 percent were placed with at least one.
- Kin placements did a better job of keeping sibling groups together than did other placement types, with 72 percent of children in sibling groups of two placed together, 56 percent in groups of three, and 43 percent in groups of 4 together.
- Hispanic and Asian children in sibling groups of two were more likely to be placed together than were their Black or White counterparts.